

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13

DHA-02 /072 W

----- 100848

R 201046Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8489

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 13882

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, IN

SUBJ: LIFTING OF RESTRICTIONS ON FOREIGN MEDIA

1. FOREIGN MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES WERE INVITED TO DINNER SATURDAY EVENING BY MINISTER OF INFORMATION SHUKLA AND ADVISED THAT EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY THEY WOULD NO LONGER BE RESTRICTED AS TO WHAT THEY COULD WRITE (THE PRESS GUIDELINES) NOR ARE THEY REQUIRED TO FILE COPIES OF THEIR MATERIAL WITH THE CCENSORS.

2. THE LIGHTING OF RESTICTIONS CAME ABOUT WITHOUT ANY PRIOR

HINT AND TOOK THE CORRESPONDENTS BY COMPLETE SURPRISE. NEITHER THEY NOR THE EMBASSY HAVE ANY INDICATIONS AS TO WAHT CAUSED THIS TURNABOUT--ESPECIALLY AS IT FOLLOWS BY ONLY THREE DAYS THE LAST LETTER (TO A AP CORRESPONDENT) FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CENSOR THAT THEY WERE DISSATISFIED WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF SOME CORRESPONDENTS IN THEIR ADHERENCE TO PRESS GUIDE- LINES AND REGULATIONS.

3. THERE HAS BEEN NO REPORTING OF THE LIFTING OF RESTRICTIONS

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IN THE LOCAL MEDIA AND THERE ALSO IS NO INDICATION THAT THE

GOI INTENDS TO EAS ANY OF ITS RESTRICTIONS ON THE INDIAN PRESS.

4. COMMENT: THE CHANGE IS SYMBOLIC RATHER THAN SUBSTANTIVE SINCE VIRTUALLY ALL FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS HAVE BEEN IGNORED THE "GUIDELINES" AND FILING COPIES OF THEIR DISPATCHES EITHER SPORADICALLY OR LATE. WE UNDERSTAND THE DECISION WAS PERSONALLY APPROVED BY THE PRIME MINISTER, BUT WE SEE IT AS RELATED TO INDIA'S FOREIGN PRESS IMAGE RATHER THAN PRESAGING ANY SIGNIFICANT DOMESTIC CHANGES IN POLICY. WE KNOW SOME OFFICIALS HAVE PRIVATELY URGED A RELAXATION OF RESTRICTIONS ON THE FOREIGN PRESS FOR OVER A YEAR, AND MRS. GANDHI MAY HAVE FINALLY DECIDED THAT THE HARD LINE WAS GETTING HER NO POINTS AND HAVE DECIDED TO TRY SOME "HONEY" FOR A CHANGE. THE FOREIGN PRESS IS PLEASED BUT RESERVED IN PREDICTING HOW LONG IT WILL ALL LAST. SHUKLA TOLD THE PRESS THE GOI WOULD EVEN CONSIDER AN APPLICATION FROM THE WASHINGTON POST FOR A CORRESPONDENT "ON ITS MERITS" SAXBE

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 20 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: vogelfj
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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